Maintenance of plants and trees on central verge of roads

2637. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the projects regarding maintenance of plants and trees on Central verge of roads in the Capital for example on the road connecting Nizammuddin Bridge in Delhi;

(b) whether it is a fact that for months together, the department fails to maintain, prune and shape beautifully the plants and trees with the result that unwieldy growth takes place giving a bad look to the roads; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Plantation and maintenance of plants and trees on central verge of roads in the capital, including the road connecting Nizammuddin Bridge in Delhi, is done by various departments of the Government as well as Municipalities of Delhi state. Forest Department of Delhi undertakes maintenance of plantations on 8 roads of the capital, namely Road No. 43, NH-10, Nelson Mandela Road, Aruna Asaf Ali Road, Vikas Marg, Ring Road from Rajghat to ITO on the left side, Road No. 56, and NH-24 bypass from Noida 'More' to ITO crossing which includes stretch of Nizammuddin Bridge. Necessary measures are taken periodically for proper maintenance of the plants and trees, subject to availability of funds.

(c) Does not arise.

Air pollution in Delhi

2638. DR. K. MALAISAMY:
SHRI S.P.M. SAYED KHAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Delhi's air is the worst among the 20 Asian cities as evaluated recently by a joint study of the World Bank and Asian Development Board;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Supreme Court has identified 16 cities in India as equal or more polluted than Delhi in Air Pollution Warranting Action plan;

(c) if so, what are the action plans so far evolved and executed and to what extent the problems have been curbed, controlled, contained and mitigated;

(d) what are the preventive aspects of pollution abatement and promotion technologies; and

(e) what has specially been done on vehicular emissions, the major cause for urban ambient of air quality?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The Asian Development Bank in a study entitled Air Quality Management Capability in Asian Cities under the Air Pollution in the Mega cities of Asia (APMA) has assessed the air quality management capacities of 23 cities. The study is on benchmarking Urban Air Quality Management in the cities of Asia based on the data for 2000-2002. In general, Respirable Suspended Particulate Matter (RSPM/PM10) is main pollutant of concern and Delhi is reported to be higher than other Asian cities respect to this parameter. However, levels of Sulphur Dioxide and Nitrogen Dioxide are reported to be lower compared to other Asian cities.

(b) to (d) The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its various orders from time to time, has identified 16 cities namely Agra, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Varansi, Jharia, Jodhpur, Chennai, Kolkata, Patna, Faridabad, Pune, Sholapur and Mumbai, for which action plans have been prepared for improvement of air quality. Some of the mitigative measures initiated by these cities include introduction of stricter emission norms for new and in-use vehicles, introduction of cleaner fuels, both for vehicles and industries, stricter pollution control vigil, better traffic management etc.

The recently monitored air quality data indicates that the level of RSPM have decreased in Agra, Faridabad, Lucknow, Surat and Sholapur in the last few years. The levels of Nitrogen Dioxide have also shown decreasing trend in cities like Coimbatore, Jabalpur and Sholapur. Similarly, decreasing trends in respect of Sulphur Dioxide have also been observed in the cities of Faridabad, Lucknow and Pune.

(e) The following specific steps have been taken for control of vehicular pollution in the country:

- Introduction of unleaded petrol in entire country.
- Introduction of Euro-II emission norms for the whole country and Euro-III norms for 11 mega cities.
- Introduction of Euro-II and Euro-III compliant fuel for the whole country and 11 mega cities respectively. This includes reduction in Sulphur and Benzene contents in diesel and petrol.
- Introduction of cleaner fuels like Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) in a few polluted cities.
- Introduction of improved Pollution Under Control (PUC) certification system.
- Setting-up continuous air quality monitoring stations in 16 cities.
- Initiation of source-apportionment studies in six cities.

Wildlife conservation by Army soldiers

2639. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that army soldiers in Jammu & Kashmir and North-East will be engaged in wildlife conservation;

(b) if so, the rationale of the decision and its possible impact on already stressed army personnel;

(c) whether it is also a fact that his Ministry is also contemplating funding/sponsoring of ecological battalions; and

(d) if so, the details of the scheme envisaged?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No, Sir. There is no such proposal in the Ministry to engage army soldiers in wildlife conservation.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The existing Ecological Task Forces (ETFs) Scheme was initiated by the Ministry of Defence in 1982 with a view to securing involvement of ex-servicemen in afforestation and eco-development in remote